

Work Process and Restriction Related to Activities Carried Out in a Waste Sorting Cooperative

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BACKGROUND

The structure of **waste sorting workers' organizations** in Brazil has two critical perspectives: the need to encourage solid waste management systems and **difficult working conditions**.

GOAL

To **analyze the working conditions** in a waste cooperative, **highlighting the variability** associated with **facilities, process, and materials** that workers face, as well as the **risks** and **discomforts** in their workplace.

METHODS

A case study. **Interviews** (including **simultaneous verbalizations** and body **discomfort questionnaire**).

RESULTS

- Variability Associated with **Volume, Condition and Type of Materials**.
- **Risk of Accidents** and **Discomforts** in the Workplace.

Variability and Risks

*"I work this way, **carefully**. I open this box, **take this piece of glass and wrap it in a newspaper to keep people from cutting themselves** [...] if you can take the glass, you do, but if the milk box is too full and the glass is as glued, so it will take time and you will waste time, then leave it there and let it move down on the conveyor (the material is not separate)" (worker)*

*"There are a lot of diapers here, **hospital waste** that should not come here, and **a lot of needles** containing blood [...], and **we have to be alert to avoid getting hurt here...** because you know, here we have to work focused on what you are doing [...] **You need to learn to be fast**" (worker).*

Discomforts

Out of the 14 interviewees, 10 (70%) reported having **body pain**, especially in the **upper and lower limbs**. Many have had **back pain** since **they work standing up**, ordering the waste. They believe that back pain is caused by **the need to flex repeatedly to remove items from the conveyor belts**.

Conclusion

It was found that waste separation operations are carried out in **precarious environments and working conditions**. Besides, the inherent variability in recyclable materials makes it challenging to anticipate decision-making.